

recognizes Senator Vrtiska.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the body, I, too, oppose the Maurstad amendment for many of the reasons that have already been spelled out by Senator Bernard-Stevens. One of the problems is that we actually started out with a bill among a lot of people across the state who were looking for a way for entrepreneurs to get some help in starting out their problems and as Senator Bernard-Stevens so eloquently said to you, what really can happen so quickly is that some of the areas who have good economic development plans in place and are ready to go are pretty apt to come in with a sizeable request for a grant and if they can get it approved then all the money is gone. What I would really like to do is give this a chance at least for a year to see who is out there and what kind of programs that we're trying to get started up and maybe after a year or so, if this program is as good as I would think...hope that it could be and will turn out to be, the dollar signs can be raised and we can probably raise that cap up to where it would accommodate more people. At this particular time, because my real intent of the bill was tended toward more small companies, I feel like I have to oppose the Maurstad amendment. Thank you.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Vrtiska. Senator Maurstad.

SENATOR MAURSTAD: Madam President, obviously they raise concerns that I raised when we discussed this at General File which was, if we have concerns whether or not the Department of Economic Development can appropriately adopt the rules and regulations to make this successful, then not only is the \$25,000 cap a question mark, but the whole purpose of this bill is a question mark. So the extent is to what...the purpose is to what extent can we rely on the Department of Economic Development to do what is going to be in their best interest and that develop a good program. They can also take into account the considerations that have been raised relative to various organized parts of the state swallowing up this money as opposed to those that are not organized and of course the purpose of this is to try to encourage those that have not collaborated to do so. The other aspect, \$250,000 is hardly a great deal of money which one could question the commitment to this program to start with, but to further limit that and to say we're only going to allow \$25,000, I have to ask is that the type of incentive that is going to encourage people to do what they